

About the Author

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Series Foreword

Move by Move is a series of opening books which uses a question-and-answer format. One of our main aims of the series is to replicate – as much as possible – lessons between chess teachers and students.

All the way through, readers will be challenged to answer searching questions and to complete exercises, to test their skills in chess openings and indeed in other key aspects of the game. It's our firm belief that practising your skills like this is an excellent way to study chess openings, and to study chess in general.

Many thanks go to all those who have been kind enough to offer inspiration, advice and assistance in the creation of *Move by Move*. We're really excited by this series and hope that readers will share our enthusiasm.

John Emms
Everyman Chess

Introduction

I started playing the Veresov in the mid-80s. In those days the Internet was still not available to the masses and computers were still too expensive for the ordinary chess player. I lived in a part of the world where chess information was scarce and games from Europe and America often took months to arrive in printed form. As a result, I was handicapped by my lack of the latest theory in the openings that I played.

I started looking around for an opening that was rarely played and thus did not have a lot of theory. I like to play against semi-open games like Pirc and French, but I disliked meeting the Sicilian. There were too many lines to prepare against and Sicilian players are the most booked-up players I know.

What I found as the perfect weapon was the Veresov. Once I started preparing the opening after 1 d4 d5 2 ♘c3 ♗f6 3 ♕g5, I found that I was much the more familiar with the positions that resulted. My opponents started to avoid this move order and played into other openings like the Pirc, Caro-Kann and French. This suited me as well. I carefully prepared specific lines for each of these openings. As time passed, I built up a narrow but complete repertoire starting with 1 d4.

In my experience, authors of chess opening books seem to be unconsciously biased in their recommendations. They always seem to emphasize the positive variations while glossing over or omitting entirely lines which are unfavourable to their opening. In this book I have tried to be impartial and you will see my recommendations for both colours. There is a large number of my own games in this book. I have included them because I can explain my own games better than any games played by others and in so doing better educate my readers on the subject matter.

I only recommend the Veresov if you are also comfortable playing against the French, the Caro-Kann and the Pirc. This is because Black can avoid the Veresov by playing differently on his second move: for instance, 1 d4 d5 2 ♘c3 c6 (Caro-Kann Defence) or 2...e6 (French Defence).

This book contains plenty of original analysis that I have made over the years. After studying it, I am confident you will be ready to meet any black replies in your Veresov games.

The Scope of this Book

I deal with the Veresov proper and some Anti-Veresov lines. This means that transpositions to other openings will not be included. If you plan to play the Veresov, you must be ready to face the other openings I mentioned above.

The Veresov can be reached through the move order 1 d4 d5 2 ♖c3 ♗f6 3 ♕g5 or 1 d4 ♗f6 2 ♖c3 d5 3 ♕g5. A very popular move in modern times is 3 ♕f4, instead of putting the bishop on g5. The ideas behind 3 ♕f4 are very different and this move is handled in the last chapter of the book.

A History of the Veresov

Although Savielly Tartakower, Victor Veresov and later the German IM Kurt Richter were the first well-known masters who started playing this opening (for this reason it is sometimes called the Richter-Veresov), there is still some debate on the name of the opening.

GM Serper wrote on Chess.com:

“To call the opening 1 d4 d5 2 ♖c3 ♗f6 3 ♕g5 the *Veresov* is unhistorical and forms part of the legacy of Soviet intellectual imperialism. Although played earlier, this opening owes its development as part of modern chess to the ‘Hypermodern’ players Breyer, Reti and Tartakower. The latter, a super-GM of his time, in particular deserves to have his name associated with this opening: *MegaBase* has 19 games of his with it, the earliest played in 1922 (when Veresov – born 1912 – was probably still in short trousers), and the last in 1951.

“Many other strong players have a better (or equal but prior) claim than Veresov to have their name associated with this opening, notably the German IM Kurt Richter (a brilliant attacking player) who popularised the opening in the 1930s; books from that era usually called this Richter’s Opening. *Megabase* contains 21 of his games with it, the first in 1928. To compare, Veresov has 23 games with it in *Megabase*, the first in 1938. A further injustice was done to Richter by the Soviets, who named the popular Sicilian line 1 e4 c5 2 ♗f3 ♗c6 3 d4 exd4 4 ♗xd4 ♗f6 5 ♖c3 d6 6 ♕g5 after their player Rauzer, yet much of the early development and testing was done by Richter.”

With all due respect to Richter, I prefer the shorter Veresov name. Somehow, *the Richter* does not have the same ring.

Key Ideas

After 3 ♕g5, White ‘threatens’ to take on f6, doubling Black’s pawns. I say ‘threatens’ because White may choose not to capture even if Black allows him to. For example, one of the main responses is 3...♕f5 to which White often replies 4 f3 which takes the game into a more tactical direction.

There are two approaches to using the Veresov in your own games. The positional approach involves an exchange on f6, where White gives up the bishop-pair in exchange for weakening Black’s pawn structure. White can also go for a tactical approach with early f2-f3 and e2-e4 pawn pushes, when the play can become very sharp and favours the better prepared player.

Acknowledgements

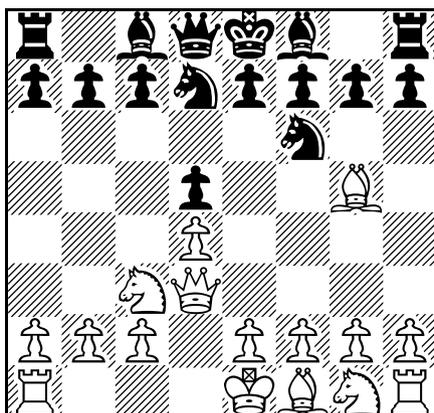
My thanks to Junior Tay without whom this book would never have seen the light of day and for providing games, and to John Emms who believed in a novice like me. I also want to thank my wife, Liway, for her understanding and support through all the years.

Jimmy Liew,
Puchong,
January 2015

Chapter Four

The Main Line: 4 ♔d3

1 d4 d5 2 ♘c3 ♞f6 3 ♙g5 ♞bd7 4 ♔d3



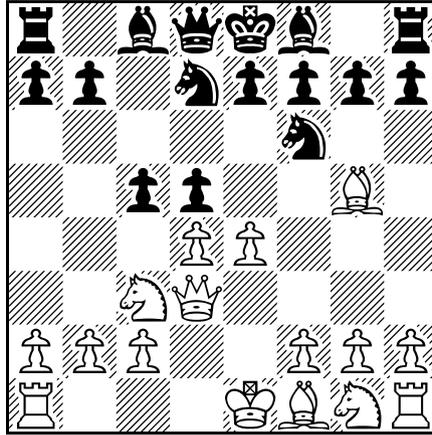
3...♞bd7 is one of the main lines of the Veresov and Black's most popular move. He prevents one of White's main themes which is to double the pawns on f6. Black often follows up with ...c6 or ...c5 to open the diagonal for his queen to go to a5 to pin the knight on c3. Against this line the move 4 ♔d3 has become very popular in recent times and even Hikaru Nakamura has tried it.

Game 22
M.Anurag-R.Jumabayev
Baku 2013

1 d4 ♞f6 2 ♘c3 d5 3 ♙g5 ♞bd7 4 ♔d3

In the early days of the Veresov, White mainly played for the f2-f3 and e2-e4 pawn push. Nowadays black players are familiar with the methods of countering this, as we will see in the next chapter. That helps to explain why the queen move has become the most popular in recent times. White does not waste time on pushing his pawn to f3. Instead, he supports e2-e4 with his queen and prepares for quick queenside castling.

4...c5 5 e4



One of a few options, as we will see.

5...cxd4

Instead, 5...dxe4 6 ♖xe4 ♗xe4 7 ♜xe4 cxd4 8 ♜xd4 ♜a5+ 9 ♕d2 ♜e5+ 10 ♜xe5 ♗xe5 11 ♕c3 ♗c6 12 0-0-0 ♕d7 is equal. However, if Black tries to be ambitious with 12...e5 then 13 ♕b5 f6 14 f4 exf4 15 ♗e2 f3? 16 ♗d4 ♕d7 17 ♜he1+ ♖f7 18 ♕c4+ ♖g6 19 gxf3 ♗xd4 20 ♜xd4 ♕f5 21 ♜g1+ ♖h5 22 ♕f7+ g6 23 ♜d5 wins.

6 ♕xf6

I believe 5 e4 is playable as long as White does not mind getting a drawn game quickly. See my recommendations in the notes to Black's 9th move, below.

5 e4 was dismissed by Eric Prié as "obviously wrong" based on the game P.Richmond-J.Gallagher, Nottingham 1987, which went 5...cxd4 6 ♜xd4 e5 7 ♜a4 d4 8 ♗d5 ♕e7 9 ♕xf6 (after 9 ♗xe7 ♜xe7 10 0-0-0 0-0 11 f4 h6 12 fxe5? ♗xe5 13 ♕xf6 ♜xf6 14 ♜xd4 ♕g4 15 ♜e1 ♜fd8 Black has a winning attack) 9...♕xf6 and Black was better with his bishop-pair and strong centre.

6...♗xf6

Another encounter witnessed 6...dxe4 7 ♜xd4 exf6 8 0-0-0 ♕c5 9 ♜d5 ♜e7 10 ♕b5 (better than recapturing the e-pawn immediately; the key is to prevent Black from castling to safety) 10...a6 (10...0-0 11 ♕xd7 ♜d8 12 ♕xc8 ♜xd5 13 ♗xd5 ♜d6 14 ♕g4 ♕xf2 15 ♗e2 is not something Black fancies unless it is forced, which it is not) 11 ♕xd7+ ♕xd7 12 ♜xb7 ♜a7 13 ♜b8+ ♜d8 14 ♜xd8+ ♖xd8 15 ♗xe4 ♕b6 16 ♗f3 ♖c8 17 ♗d4 (Black's bishop-pair does not give him any compensation as his king and rook on a7 are badly placed) 17...♜f8

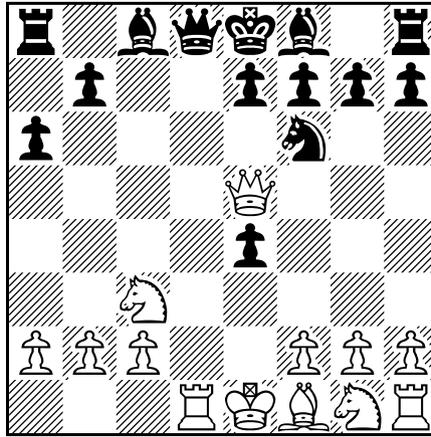
The Veresov: Move by Move

18 ♖he1 ♜c7 19 f3 ♔b8 20 c3 h5 21 ♘d6 ♙xd4 22 ♜xd4 ♙e6 23 ♚c2 ♜c6 24 a4 g5 25 b4 ♜d8 26 ♜ed1 (White is essentially two passed pawns up and it is only a matter of technique before the point is his) ♜d7 27 b5 axb5 28 axb5 ♜b6 29 c4 ♜c7 30 ♔b3 g4 31 f4 ♜xd6 32 ♜xd6 ♙xc4+ 33 ♔b4 ♙e6 34 ♜b6+ ♔a7 35 ♜c6 ♜b7 36 ♜d8 ♜e7 37 ♔c5 h4 38 ♔d6 and 1-0, R.Barhudarian-A.Kazantsev, St Petersburg 2011.

7 ♜xd4 dxe4 8 ♜e5!?

After 8 ♜xd4+ ♔xd8 9 0-0-0 ♔c7 Black is better. His king can reach safety on b6 and White may not be able to regain his pawn.

8...a6 9 ♜d1



9...♜b6??

Falling for White's well concealed trap. Much better is 9...♙d7 10 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 11 ♜xe4 ♜a5+ 12 c3 ♙c6 13 ♜f4 and then:

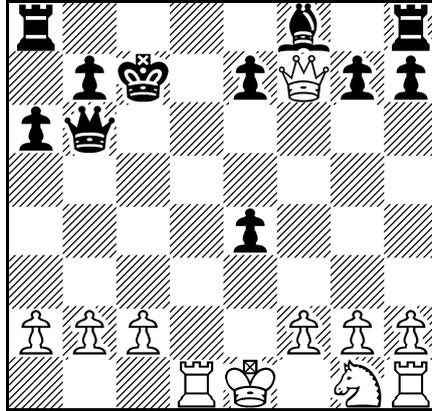
a) 13...g5!? 14 ♜d4 ♜g8 15 ♙c4 (15 ♘f3 did not work out in I.Schneider-H.Steingrimsson, German League 2005, where after 15...♙g7 16 ♜d3 g4 17 ♜xh7 ♔f8 18 ♘d4 ♜e5+ 19 ♙e2 ♙xg2 20 ♜g1 ♜h8 21 ♜f5 ♜xh2 White lost) 15...♙g7 16 ♜g4 ♜e5+ 17 ♘e2 b5 18 ♙b3 e6 19 0-0 h5 20 ♜d4! ♜xe2? 21 ♜d6 ♜c8 22 ♜fe1 ♜g4 23 f3 ♜f5 24 ♙xe6 fxe6 25 ♜xe6+ ♔f7 26 ♜e7 mate.

b) Safest is 13...e6 14 ♘f3 ♙xf3 15 ♜xf3 ♜b6 16 ♙d3 ♙e7 17 0-0 0-0 18 ♜e2 with an equal position.

10 ♙b5+! ♙d7

10...axb5 11 ♘xb5 wins the rook on a8 thanks to the knight fork on c7.

11 ♘d5 ♘xd5 12 ♙xd7+ ♔xd7 13 ♜xd5+ ♔c7 14 ♜xf7



Exercise: How could White have improved on the text move?

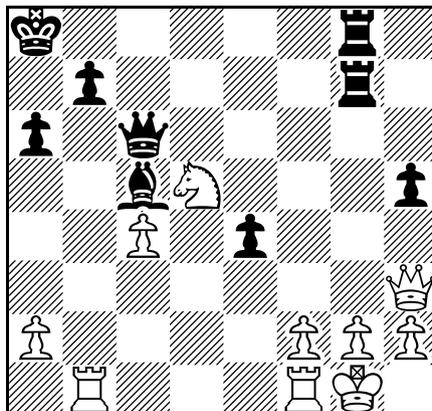
Answer: It was more important to prevent the black king from reaching safety on the queenside. Thus 14 ♖e5+ was better, and White can always regain the pawn on f7 and/or e4. After 14...♙c8 15 ♘e2 ♜f6 16 ♖xe4 e5 17 0-0 ♜c6 18 ♞d5 ♙c7 19 ♞fd1 ♜c8 20 ♘g3 ♙b8 21 c3 White has control of the open d-file.

14...♜c8 15 ♘e2 ♙b8 16 ♖f4+ e5 17 ♖xe5+ ♙a8 18 0-0 ♙c5 19 b4?!

Quite unnecessary. Instead, 19 ♖xe4 ♜he8 (or 19...♜ce8 20 ♖c4) 20 ♖f3 ♞f8 21 ♘f4 g5 22 ♘d5 ♖xb2 23 ♖b3 ♖e5 24 ♞d2 defends the weaknesses on c2 and f2 and keeps an extra pawn.

19...♖xb4 20 ♜b1 ♖c4 21 ♖xg7 ♜b8 22 ♖c3 ♖d5 23 ♖b3 ♖c6 24 ♘c3 ♜hg8?

Missing 24...e3 25 fxe3 ♙xe3+ 26 ♙h1 ♜hd8 when Black has sufficient counterplay.
25 ♘d5 h5 26 c4 ♜g7 27 ♖h3 ♜bg8



28 ♖b3?

28 g3 had to be played.

28...e3 29 fxe3 ♖xg2+ 30 ♖xg2 ♖xg2+ 31 ♗xg2 ♖g6+ 32 ♔f2 ♖c2+ 33 ♔g1 ♖g6+ 34 ♔f2 ♖f5+ 35 ♔e1 ♖c2 36 ♖f7??

This should have lost due to the looseness of the rook on f7.

36...♖xc4?

Not the best and now Black even went on to lose. After 36...♖c1+ 37 ♔e2 ♖xc4+ 38 ♖d3 ♖xa2+ 39 ♖d2 ♖c4+ 40 ♔f2 a5 Black just advances his passed pawn. White really has no dangerous threats against the black king here, as shown by 41 ♖c7+ ♔a7 42 ♖dd7 a4 43 ♖d5 a3 44 ♖xb7+ ♔a6 45 ♖b4+ ♔a5 46 ♖c6+ ♔a4 47 ♖d4 a2.

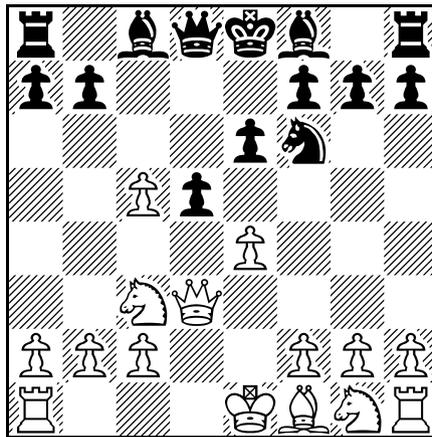
37 ♖d7 ♖h4+ 38 ♔d2 ♖xh2+ 39 ♔d3 ♖b8 40 ♖c7 b6?? 41 ♖xc5 ♖d6 42 ♖c8+ ♔a7 43 ♖c7+ ♔a8 44 ♔d4 b5 45 ♖bc3 1-0

Game 23
R.Mesias-A.Escobar
 Cali 2007

1 d4 d5 2 ♖c3 ♗f6 3 ♔g5 ♖bd7 4 ♖d3 c5 5 ♔xf6 ♖xf6 6 dxc5

Another radical approach.

6...e6 7 e4



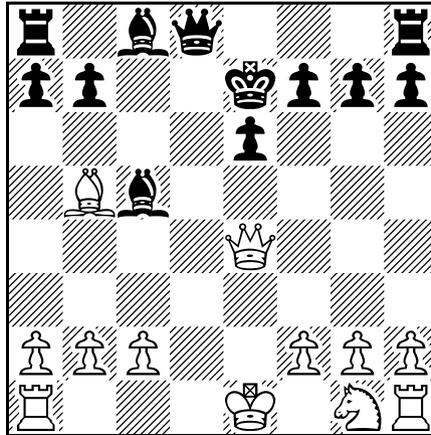
White must open the game immediately before Black has the chance to complete his development with ...♔xc5 and ...0-0.

After 7 0-0-0 ♔xc5 8 e4 0-0! 9 exd5 exd5 10 ♖xd5 ♔e6 11 ♖xf6+ ♖xf6 Black is temporarily a pawn down, but his superior development supplies more than enough compensation, to say nothing of the pawns on a2 and f2 which are hanging.

7...♖xe4

Instead, 7...d4 8 0-0-0 ♗xc5 9 ♘a4 (better is 9 e5! ♘d7 10 ♘e4, and if 10...♘xe5? 11 ♖g3 or 10...b6 11 f4 ♗b7 12 ♘f3, when White is for choice as the pawns on f4 and e5 control some important squares; if Black castles kingside he can come under great pressure by moves like ♘fg5, ♖h3 and ♗d3) 9...b6 10 e5 ♘d7 11 ♖g3? (White should play f4, ♘f3 and take on d4) 11...♖c7 12 ♘f3 0-0 13 ♗d3 h6? (missing 13...♗b7, and if 14 ♗xh7+? ♘xh7 15 ♘g5+ ♔g8 16 ♖h4 ♖fc8) 14 ♗e4 ♖b8 15 ♘xd4 ♗xd4 16 ♖xd4 ♖xe5 17 ♖xe5 ♘e5 was equal in P.Freisler-A.Delchev, Pardubice 1997.

8 ♘xe4 dxe4 9 ♖xe4 ♗xc5 10 ♗b5+ ♔e7



The king on e7 is not in the best position. However, White's next two moves only help it to achieve a kind of security on f7.

11 ♖h4+

It was better to regroup with 11 ♖e2 ♗d7 (11...♖b6 12 0-0-0! ♗xf2 13 ♔b1 a6 14 ♗a4 ♗d4 15 ♗b3 ♗f6 16 ♘f3 ♗d7 17 g4 h6 18 h4 g5 19 ♘e5 gives White a strong attack) 12 0-0-0 ♗xb5 13 ♖xb5 ♖c7 14 ♘f3!? ♗xf2 15 ♖hf1 ♗e3+ 16 ♔b1 and Black's position is very precarious: for example, 16...f6 17 ♖b4+ ♗c5 18 ♖g4 ♖hg8 19 ♖fe1 ♖c6 20 ♖d2 ♖ad8 21 ♘e5!.

11...f6 12 ♖g3 ♔f7 13 ♗d3 ♖d6

After 13...♖a5+ 14 c3 ♖b6 15 ♘e2 ♖xb2 16 0-0 White has very good compensation for the pawn.

14 ♖f3 ♖e5+ 15 ♘e2 ♗d7

Wisely avoiding 15...♖xb2 16 0-0 f5 17 ♘f4 ♗d6 18 ♖ae1 with pressure on the e-file.

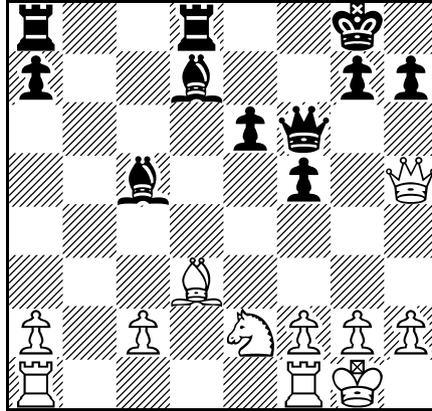
16 ♖xb7

Instead, 16 0-0 ♗c6 17 ♖h3 and ♖ae1 would continue to apply pressure on e6.

16...♖hd8 17 ♖e4

And here after 17 0-0 ♖ab8 18 ♖f3 ♖xb2 19 ♖ad1 ♖xa2 20 ♗xh7 White has a slight advantage due to the Black's shaky king position.

17...♖xb2 18 0-0 f5 19 ♖h4 ♖f6 20 ♖h5+ ♔g8



White's last few moves were quite pointless and allowed Black to bring his king back to safety. Black's pair of bishops now decides the game.

21 ♖c4 ♜ac8 22 ♙b3 ♚h8 23 ♜ad1 ♙b5 24 ♛f3 e5 25 c4 ♙c6 26 ♛h3 g5!?

This is quite unnecessary. The two bishops are already aiming at the white king and Black merely needed to open more lines to make their presence even more commanding: for instance, 26...e4 27 ♘c3? (even after 27 ♛c3 e3 28 fxe3 ♜xd1 29 ♜xd1 ♛g5 30 g3 ♙xe3+ 31 ♙f1 ♜e8 the black bishops are all powerful) 27...e3 28 ♘d5 ♙xd5 29 ♜xd5 exf2+ wins.

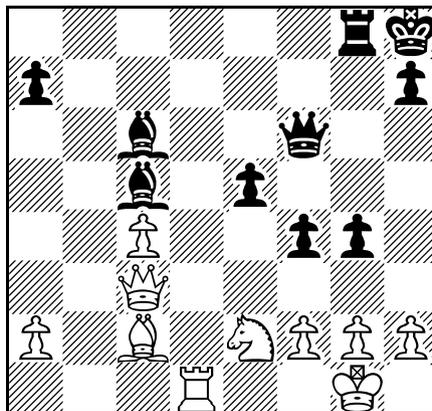
27 ♛c3?

Eric Prié gives the amazing line 27 ♘c3!! g4 28 ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 29 ♛h5 ♙e8 30 ♘d5!, which was very easy to miss. However, even here after 30...♙xh5 31 ♘xf6 ♙f7 32 ♘d5 ♙g7 followed by the plan of ...a5, ...♙f7-e8 and ...♜d8-b8 Black will penetrate down the b-file.

27...f4!

A classic case of complete domination by the two bishops over the White's pieces.

28 ♙c2 g4 29 ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 30 ♜d1 ♜g8



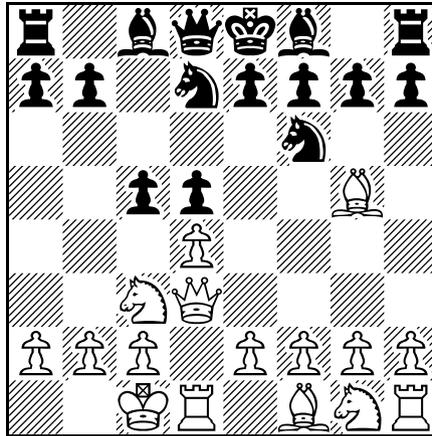
31 ♖f1 ♗xg2+! 32 ♔e1

Or if 32 ♖xg2 f3+ 33 ♖h1 fxe2 34 ♔e1 ♜f3+ 35 ♜xf3 gxf3 36 ♗e4 ♗xf2.

32...♗c6 33 ♖d3 ♜h4 0-1

Game 24
R.Vaganian-J.Adamski
Copenhagen 2006

1 d4 d5 2 ♘c3 ♗f6 3 ♗g5 ♗bd7 4 ♖d3 c5 5 0-0-0



White's main move. He applies indirect pressure to d5 and waits for Black to commit himself.

5...cxd4

5...e6 is well met by 6 e4. Now that Black has committed himself to ...e6, this is good as it opens up the game with the black king still in the centre:

a) 6...cxd4 7 ♜xd4 ♗c5 (opening the d-file is really bad: 7...dxe4? 8 ♗xe4 ♜a5 9 ♗xf6 gxf6 10 ♗xf6+ ♗xf6 11 ♜xf6 ♔g8 12 ♗b5+ and Black resigned in J.Hector-N.Kirkegaard, Copenhagen 2006, since 12...♜xb5 13 ♔d8 mates) 8 ♜a4!? (8 ♖d3 d4 9 ♗a4 b6 was E.Jakubiec-V.Koziak, Koszalin 2005, and now White should continue 10 ♗f3 e5 11 c3 with chances for both sides) 8...d4 9 ♔xd4! ♗xd4 10 ♜xd4 when White's better development compensates for the exchange.

b) 6...dxe4 7 ♗xe4 ♜a5 8 ♗xf6 gxf6 9 ♖b1 f5 10 ♗xc5 ♗xc5 11 dxc5 ♗xc5 12 f4 was R.Barhudarian-R.Eidelson, St Petersburg 2007. Instead of 12 f4, White should have emphasized Black's inability to develop his queenside with 12 ♗e2! 0-0 (or 12...♗xf2 13 ♗h3 ♗c5 14 ♜g3 ♗d7 15 ♗g5 ♔g8 16 ♗h5 with a clear advantage) 13 ♗h3 ♗e7 14 g4 with good attacking chances on the kingside.

Instead, for the critical 5...c4, see the next game.